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Message Text

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47
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 PPT-01

PA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SY-05 JUSE-00 PRS-01

(ISO) W
---------- 105657
P 301422Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7080

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 11291
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, MASS, ETRD, NI
SUBJECT: GUTHRIE, SPRIGGS CASES

REF: LAGOS 10785

1. COUNSELOR FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS GUSTAFSON WAS INFORMED THIS MORNING BY ATTORNEY GENERAL THAT DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN BY HEAD OF STATE AND CHIEF OF STAFF YAR ADUA TO RELEASE GUTHRIE "IMMEDIATELY", BUT THAT SPRIGGS WOULD NOT BE RELEASED "UNTIL DECEMBER". ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS APOLOGETIC AND OPENED CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT HIS NEWS WAS "NOT ENTIRELY GOOD." AG SAID HE TOLD HIS SMC COLLEAGUES THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS DECISION AND THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS SPRIGGS WITH THEM AGAIN ON MONDAY. MATTER WAS DISCUSSED AT SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL MEETING WEDNESDAY. AG FELT THAT OTHERS WERE TIRED AND MOMENT WAS NOT OPPORTUNE TO PRESS MATTER FURTHER. GUSTAFSON THANKED AG BUT NOTED THAT DELAY IN RELEASE OF SPRIGGS WOULD BE PERSONALLY EMBARASSING TO HIM AND THAT EMBASSY UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD BE CRITICIZED FOR APPARENTLY TRADING OFF SPRIGGS FOR GUTHRIE. AG SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO LET THE MATTER REST. HE ASKED GUSTAFSON TO TELEPHONE MONDAY AFTERNOON WHEN HE HOPED TO REPORT THAT THE SPRIGGS DECISON HAD BEEN CHANGED. HE PROMISED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN SPRIGGS' RELEASE AS A SEND OFF PRESENT TO GUSTAFSON.

2. WE WILL NOT DISCUSS GUTHRIE'S IMPENDING RELEASE WITH LOCKHEED TEAM OR BRISTOW HELICOPTER LTD (SPRIGGS EMPLOYER) UNTIL GUTHRIE
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IS ACTUALLY RELEASED. AG THOUGHT COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNAL

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AFFAIRS WOULD SIGN DEPORTATION - RELEASE ORDER ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, SINCE HE ENGAGED IN INDEPENDENCE DAY (OCTOBER 1) CEREMONIES TODAY AND TOMORROW. ACTUAL RELEASE MIGHT ACTUALLY OCCUR OCTOBER 5.

3. AG DID NOT DISCUSS RATIONALE OF HEAD OF STATE AND CHIEF OF STAFF IN DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN GUTHRIE AND SPRIGGS, ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT THAT THEIR RELATIVE AGES (GUTHRIE IS 58 AND SPRIGGS 33) WAS PRINCIPAL FACTOR. FROM TONE OF AG'S REMARKS, GUSTAFSON CONCLUDED THAT AG HOPES THAT HE CAN OBTAIN CONCURRENCE IN SPRIGGS' RELEASE AT THIS TIME, BUT WAS DISAPPOINTED HE COULD NOT SAY SO TODAY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAGOS11291
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760369-0727
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976093/aaaaacgp.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LAGOS 10785
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <28 JUL 2004 by coburnhl, PRIVACY>; RELEASED <28 JUL 2004 by ullricre>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

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04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GUTHRIE, SPRIGGS CASES
TAGS: CASC, MASS, ETRD, NI, (SPRIGGS), (GUTHRIE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006